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ABSTRACT

This document, which was developed through a decade of research and field testing involving more than 700 people, offers step-by-step strategies that educators, employment specialists, occupational therapists, and other professionals can use to help youths and adults with mild, moderate, or severe disabilities make their own employment choices. The handbook presents and explains a self-directed employment (SDE) model in which individuals actively participate in assessing their own interests and skills, choosing a job, evaluating whether the job meets their expectations, and managing workplace challenges. The following are among the topics discussed in the handbook's 12 chapters: (1) basic principles and goals of the SDE model; (2) self-determination as a concept powering self-directed employment practices; (3) an overview of implementation of the SDE model; (4) making choices; (5) exploring choices; (6) testing choices; (7) finalizing choices; (8) finding a job matching skills and preferences; (9) solving on-the-job problems; (10) stories of 16 individuals who used the SDE model and 4 data-based case studies; (11) program statistics; and (12) SDE in the contexts of self-determination, community employment, and self-management influence. The appendix presents photocopiable forms, questionnaires, and sample resumes referred to in Chapters 4-9. (Contains 186 references and 39 tables/figures.) (MN)

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